

Local access: Challenges and joys while building a community network mid-pandemic



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When the COVID-19 pandemic challenged the whole world, the experience of communities in the rural and remote Ciracap sub-district in West Java, Indonesia, showed the importance and power of building a local response to the crisis. Common Room fostered the deployment of the "Ciracap Sub-district Community Network", a connectivity infrastructure, in a region where people face many challenges to accessing information.

Find out more about their experience and discover news, events, opportunities and more. Welcome to the 48th monthly round-up of developments impacting your local access networks and community-based initiatives.

Events and conferences

- On 14 July, the 2022 Conference of the "Friends of a Free Internet" will have a session focusing on "Connecting everyone" and discussing community-led solutions. [Read more](#).
- The annual meeting of the Africa Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF) will be hosted from 19 to 21 July in Malawi under the overarching theme "Internet for human resilience and solidarity". [Read more](#).
- The Community Network Xchange (CNX) enters its sixth year in 2022, bringing together community network practitioners and focusing on the Asia Pacific region. CNX will be a series of five online events. The first one was held on 29 June and the next events in the series will happen on the 29 of July, August, September and October. [Register here](#).

- For those who want to exchange ideas about how to create a decentralised web that is more open, private, secure, the DWeb Camp 2022 will happen from 24 to 28 August in California. [Read more.](#)
- The BattleMesh event is going live again for its 14th edition, back to an on-site event in Rome from 19 to 22 September. It aims to bring together people from across the world to test the performance of different routing protocols for networks. [Read more.](#)

Resources from past events

- Watch the first encounter of the Community Network Xchange (CNX), held on 29 June. [Read more.](#)
- On 28 June, an [online dialogue held in Portuguese](#) discussed how gender and race impact community networks initiatives in Brazil. The event happened within the scope of a project envisaging the implementation of a Wi-Fi community network in quilombo Ribeirão Grande/Terra Seca. [Read more.](#)
- In this year's RightsCon summit, a [panel](#) dialogued about financing mechanisms for community-owned internet infrastructure and introduced some highlights of a report being launched soon on the topic. [Read more.](#)

Community networks in news and blogs

- Discover Common Room's challenges and joys while building a community network mid-pandemic in Indonesia. [Read more.](#)
- In Brazil, the [Amazon Community Networks School](#) officially started on 18 June, gathering participants from different communities in an online dialogue about the importance of popular communication for the defence of their rights and territories. [Read more.](#) [Available in Portuguese]
- The Nupef Institute published a piece about the experience of a team member on her first field trip to help with the implementation and expansion of community networks in the state of Maranhão, Brazil. [Read more.](#) [Available in Portuguese]
- This episode of BBC's Digital Planet podcast focuses on how community networks can provide a lifeline for those who cannot access the internet. [Read more.](#)

Gendering community networks

- Applications are open for the Socio Political Advocacy for Community Networks Engagement (SPACE), a capacity-building and movement-building programme that is conceived and designed within the Local Networks (LocNet) initiative. The programme is rooted in local experiences and holds an intersectional feminist approach to policy advocacy. [Read more.](#)
- The first edition of SPACE was held in 2021 and led to meaningful discussions on different topics. You can find more information about it in [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [French](#).
- Around 60 women are taking part in a series of digital literacy workshops hosted by AfChix Africa as part of its community network project in Ait Izdeg, a rural community in Morocco. [Read more.](#)

News on policy and regulation

- APC was at the [World Telecommunication Development Conference](#) advocating with partners for bottom-up and rights-based connectivity models. Within the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition, they announced pledges to enable community-led solutions. [Read more.](#)
- The Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe recently announced a plan to support the creation of community networks in all provinces in the country. This could lead to concrete support for a bottom-up approach to bridge the digital divide. [Read more.](#)
- The first community network in Zimbabwe was launched in Murambinda in May 2021. Since then, important achievements have been made in terms of creating participatory processes and multistakeholder dialogue to replicate this inspiring model. [Read more.](#)
- Broadband is important to bridge exclusion; find out why in this interview with lawyer and ICT specialist Adriana Labardini Inzunza for the Peruvian media website Brecha Cero. [Read more.](#)
- The Brazilian organisation IBEBrasil published a series of pieces on how the national regulator agency, Anatel, could build a more enabling environment in the country, such as by setting rules of valorisation of community networks' social function. Read more [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#). [Available in Portuguese]

Research

- “Community Internet networks and the collaborative production of technological and political knowledge” analyses organisations' strategies based on research on the deployment of a community network in 2019 and 2020 in a rural community of Cordoba, Argentina. [Read more.](#)

Toolkits

- Rhizomatica announced that the high frequency (HF) radio guide is now available in three languages: [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [Portuguese](#). This guide builds on diverse field experience to share knowledge on how to build an HF radio station powered by solar energy as an affordable digital telecommunications alternative.

Funding opportunities

- The IEEE Connecting the Unconnected Challenge is an annual, global competition that solicits solutions from start-ups, grassroots organisations, universities or individuals with projects or ideas to bridge the digital divide in innovative ways. Submissions for the 2022 edition are open until 13 July. [Read more.](#)

Previous editions

- Previous editions of this newsletter are available [here](#).

This newsletter is part of the Local Networks (LocNet) initiative, an initiative led by APC in partnership with Rhizomatica that aims to directly support the work of community networks and to contribute to an enabling ecosystem for the emergence and growth of community networks and

other community-based connectivity activities in developing countries. You can read more about the initiative [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

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One more thing! If you have comments about the newsletter or information relevant to the topic that you would like us to include in the next edition, please share it with us at localaccess.newsletter@apc.org.